

P 252338Z APR 96
FM AMEMBASSY BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5642
INFO ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS
USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI
NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN 000308

DEPT. FOR EAP/PIMBS
SINGAPORE FOR ARMA
CINCPAC ALSO FOR FPA - AMB. SALMON
NSC FOR ASIA DIRECTOR SANDRA KRISTOFF

E.O. 12958: 4/25/16
TAGS: [PREL](#) [BX](#)
SUBJECT: BRUNEI: A FRIEND WORTH CULTIVATING

[¶1.](#) CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR THERESA A. TULL.
REASONS: 1.5(B) AND (D).

[¶2.](#) SUMMARY: BRUNEI HAS PROVEN INCREASINGLY
OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS THAT IT IS A FRIEND OF
THE UNITED STATES, GRATEFUL FOR OUR FORWARD
DEPLOYED PACIFIC PRESENCE, AND COOPERATIVE IN
OUR EFFORTS ON SEVERAL INTERNATIONAL ISSUES,
INCLUDING KEDO, BOSNIA, AND THE MIDDLE EAST
PEACE PROCESS. FOR VERY LITTLE ADDITIONAL
INVESTMENT IN TIME AND FUNDS, THE UNITED STATES
COULD ENHANCE ITS BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP WITH
BRUNEI AND, I AM CONFIDENT, GENERATE EVEN MORE
COOPERATION FROM THIS OIL-RICH SULTANATE.

[¶3.](#) AS I CONCLUDE MY TOUR IN BRUNEI, I RECOMMEND
(A) THAT THE PRESIDENT GIVE THE SULTAN OF BRUNEI
SOME "FACE" TIME, BEGINNING WITH SCHEDULING A
BILATERAL ON THE FRINGES OF THE MANILA APEC
LEADERS MEETING, AND POSSIBLY INCLUDING A
POST-ELECTION WASHINGTON INVITATION; (B) TO
FURTHER INCREASE BILATERAL INTERACTION, THAT THE
STATE DEPARTMENT OFFER TO ESTABLISH A JOINT
COMMISSION WITH BRUNEI, AND THAT SENIOR USG
OFFICIALS FROM VARIOUS GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT
VISIT BRUNEI OCCASIONALLY, AND THAT THEIR
BRUNEIAN COUNTERPARTS BE INVITED MORE OFTEN TO
THE UNITED STATES; AND (C) THAT A MINIMUM
INTERNATIONAL VISITOR GRANT AND FULBRIGHT
PROGRAM BE RETAINED FOR BRUNEI, DESPITE USIA
BUDGET CUTBACKS. GIVEN THE SULTAN'S
PREDISPOSITION TOWARDS A CLOSER RELATIONSHIP
WITH THE U.S., THIS MODEST EFFORT WOULD PAY
DIVIDENDS IN TERMS OF ADDITIONAL COOPERATION,
INCLUDING FINANCIAL, ON BRUNEI'S PART IN CAUSES
OF IMPORTANCE TO THE UNITED STATES. END SUMMARY.

U.S. ECLIPSING GREAT BRITAIN AS IMPLICIT
GUARANTOR OF BRUNEIAN SECURITY

[¶4.](#) GREAT BRITAIN CONTINUES TO LOOM LARGE IN
BRUNEI, WITH THE RESIDUAL GURKHA PRESENCE, ITS
LOAN OFFICERS IN SERVICE WITH THE BRUNEIAN
MILITARY, AND THE TIES OF A CENTURY OF THE
BRITISH PROTECTORATE, REINFORCED BY BRUNEIAN
LINKS TO BRITISH UNIVERSITIES--AND ASSIDUOUS
CULTIVATION OF THE WEALTHY SULTAN BY BRITISH
ROYALTY. BUT GREAT BRITAIN DOES NOT HAVE THE
SEVENTH FLEET, AND IS NOT VIEWED AS THE
STABILIZER OF THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION, OR AS THE
BENIGN PROVIDER OF SECURITY IN THE UNCERTAIN
DAYS AHEAD AS CHINA DEVELOPS AS A SUPERPOWER AND
FLEXES ITS MUSCLES IN THE REGION. INCREASINGLY
I SENSE THAT FOR BRUNEI, THE UNITED STATES IS
REGARDED AS THE ULTIMATE GUARANTOR OF ITS
SECURITY--NOT THAT BRUNEI NECESSARILY EXPECTS
THE U.S. TO COME TO THE RESCUE IF INVADED, BUT
IN THE SENSE THAT THE U.S. PRESENCE,

PARTICULARLY IN THE FORM OF THE SEVENTH FLEET,
WILL KEEP POTENTIALLY AGGRESSIVE REGIONAL POWERS
AT BAY.

15. BRUNEI'S APPRECIATION FOR THE U.S. PRESENCE
WAS HEIGHTENED BY CHINA'S RECENT AGGRESSIVE
BEHAVIOR TOWARDS TAIWAN. IN RECENT WEEKS
SEVERAL SENIOR BRUNEIAN OFFICIALS, INCLUDING THE
SULTAN, HAVE EXPRESSED CONCERN TO ME ABOUT
CHINA'S INTENTIONS, AND GRATITUDE FOR THE U.S.
RESPONSE.

BRUNEI'S COOPERATION WITH THE U.S. INCREASING -----

16. IN THE PAST TWO YEARS, BRUNEI HAS INCREASED
ITS COOPERATION WITH THE U.S. IN KEY AREAS.
FIRST, WE CONCLUDED A LONG-STALLED NEGOTIATION
AND IN NOVEMBER 1994 SIGNED A MEMORANDUM OF
UNDERSTANDING ON DEFENSE COOPERATION, ON TERMS
FAVORABLE TO THE U.S. WITH REGARD TO CRIMINAL
PROCEEDINGS AGAINST POSSIBLE U.S. MILITARY
OFFENDERS--BETTER TERMS, I BELIEVE, THAN
SINGAPORE WAS WILLING TO ACCEPT. DESPITE SOME
RESIDUAL BRUNEIAN NERVOUSNESS THAT THE TINY
COUNTRY NOT BE SEEN (BY ITS POTENTIALLY
AGGRESSIVE NORTHERN NEIGHBOR) AS TOO CLOSELY
LINKED WITH THE UNITED STATES, AT THE VERY TOP
LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT IT WAS DECIDED THAT A CLOSER
RELATIONSHIP WITH THE BENIGN PROVIDER OF
SECURITY IN THE REGION, THE UNITED STATES, WAS
WORTH THE RISK OF AROUSING CONCERN IN CHINA.

17. BRUNEI HAS ALSO MARKEDLY INCREASED ITS
COOPERATION WITH THE UNITED STATES IN
INTERNATIONAL ISSUES OF MUTUAL CONCERN. THE
COUNTRY HAS RESPONDED GENEROUSLY TO OUR APPEALS
FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE KOREAN
PENINSULA ENERGY DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION
(KEDO), FOR AID TO THE PALESTINIANS IN
CONNECTION WITH THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS,
AND HAS SUPPORTED THE BOSNIAN MUSLIMS, MOST
RECENTLY WITH A US \$8 MILLION DOLLAR PLEDGE FOR
REFUGEE RELIEF AT THE BRUSSELS CONFERENCE.

18. IN APEC AND IN ASEAN, BRUNEI HAS BEEN
GENERALLY SUPPORTIVE OF U.S. GOALS. BRUNEI'S
SKILLFUL DIPLOMACY IN THE CRITICAL INITIAL
STAGES HELPED SHAPE THE ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM IN
DIRECTIONS COMPATIBLE WITH U.S. AIMS FOR THIS
IMPORTANT FORUM.

19. BRUNEI HAS ALSO GIVEN U.S. BIDDERS VALUABLE
CONTRACTS IN RECENT MONTHS (SIKORSKY, BOEING
ARGOSYSTEMS, AIRWAYS ENGINEERING). MCDONNELL
DOUGLAS AND RAYTHEON ARE COMPETING FOR SHIPBOARD
MISSILE SALES AND APPEAR TO HAVE A GOOD CHANCE
OF WINNING THE CONTRACTS.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO ENHANCE COOPERATION -----

110. ALL OF THIS COOPERATION LEADS TO ONE
CONCLUSION: FOR THE U.S., BRUNEI IS
INCREASINGLY A FRIEND, AND ONE WORTH CULTIVATING
A BIT MORE THAN WE HAVE IN THE PAST. WITH A
VERY SMALL INVESTMENT IN TIME, EFFORT, AND
FUNDS, THE U.S. COULD SOLIDIFY THIS COOPERATION,
AND MOST LIKELY GAIN MORE, INCLUDING ADDITIONAL
FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO INTERNATIONAL CAUSES
OF MUTUAL CONCERN, AND POSSIBLY SOME MORE
LUCRATIVE CONTRACTS FOR AMERICAN FIRMS.

111. I OFFER THE FOLLOWING SPECIFIC
RECOMMENDATIONS:

1A. REQUEST BILATERAL FOR THE SULTAN WITH
PRESIDENT CLINTON ON THE MARGINS OF THE MANILA

APEC LEADERS MEETING, TO REPLACE THE ABORTED OSAKA BILATERAL. PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS ARE SO IMPORTANT IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, AND PARTICULARLY IN BRUNEI. THE SULTAN FEELS A RAPPORT WITH THE PRESIDENT, WHICH BEGAN WITH THE SEATTLE APEC LEADERS SUMMIT. A SMALL MEASURE OF PERSONAL CONTACT WITH THE PRESIDENT WOULD MAKE THE SULTAN EVEN MORE RESPONSIVE TO OUR APPEALS FOR ASSISTANCE.

1B. INVITE THE SULTAN FOR AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO WASHINGTON. I BELIEVE THAT BRUNEI IS THE ONLY ASEAN COUNTRY (EXCEPT NEWLY ADMITTED VIETNAM) WHOSE HEAD OF STATE AT ONE TIME OR THE OTHER HAS NOT BEEN INVITED TO WASHINGTON. ONE RESPECTED SENIOR OFFICIAL TOLD ME THAT PERHAPS IF THE SULTAN MADE NASTY PUBLIC SPEECHES AGAINST THE U.S., HE, LIKE MALAYSIA'S MAHATIR, MIGHT ALSO BE INVITED TO THE WHITE HOUSE. THE ABSENCE OF AN OFFICIAL INVITATION IS AWKWARD BECAUSE THE SULTAN WAS IN FACT INVITED ORALLY BY THE PRESIDENT HIMSELF DURING THE SEATTLE LEADERS MEETING. PROVING THAT THIS WAS NOT JUST A CASUAL "HOPE YOU CAN COME TO MY COUNTRY SOMETIME" REMARK, PRESIDENT CLINTON REPEATED THE INVITATION TO BRUNEI'S AMBASSADOR WHEN HE PRESENTED CREDENTIALS AT THE WHITE HOUSE A COUPLE OF MONTHS AFTER THE SEATTLE MEETING. I RECOMMEND THAT THE PRESIDENT, IN 1997, EXTEND A FORMAL INVITATION TO THE SULTAN TO VISIT WASHINGTON.

1C. ESTABLISH A JOINT COMMISSION BETWEEN THE U.S. AND BRUNEI TO REVIEW ON AN ANNUAL BASIS THE OVERALL STATE OF THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP. BRUNEI HAS THESE JOINT COMMISSIONS WITH MANY COUNTRIES, INCLUDING CHINA, OMAN, PAKISTAN, ETC. THE MEETINGS ARE USUALLY CHAIRED AT THE PERMANENT SECRETARY LEVEL, AND ARE HELD IN ALTERNATE CAPITALS. THE COMMISSIONS CONSIDER WAYS TO ENHANCE COOPERATION IN THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, COMMERCIAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL FIELDS. FOR THE U.S., A COMMISSION WOULD BE A MEANS TO SHOW BRUNEI THAT WE BELIEVE THE RELATIONSHIP TO BE MORE THAN A SERIES OF TIN CUP EXERCISES. IT WOULD BRING THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY TO BRUNEI BIANNUALLY FOR BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS, GIVING VISIBLE EVIDENCE THAT WE CARE ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP.

1D. SCHEDULE MORE FREQUENT VISITS BY SENIOR USG CIVILIAN OFFICIALS TO BRUNEI FOR BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS. (U.S. SENIOR MILITARY OFFICERS VISIT BRUNEI REGULARLY; THESE VISITS SHOULD BE MAINTAINED AT CURRENT LEVELS.) THESE SHOULD INCLUDE THE SECRETARY OF COMMERCE, DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE (AND THE SECRETARY, IF HE IS TOURING THE REGION), THE USTR, AND OUR AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED NATIONS. AGAIN, THESE OCCASIONAL VISITS WOULD HAVE AS THEIR GOAL SIMPLY SHOWING BRUNEI THAT WE DO NOT TAKE THEM FOR GRANTED. WE SHOULD NOT EXPECT IMMEDIATE TANGIBLE BENEFITS, BUT OVER TIME SHOWING THAT WE TAKE BRUNEI SERIOUSLY WILL, I AM CONFIDENT, PAY DIVIDENDS IN TERMS OF INCREASED COOPERATION. AT THE SAME TIME WE SHOULD INVITE SENIOR BRUNEIAN OFFICIALS TO THE U.S. MORE FREQUENTLY.

1E. FUND A SMALL INTERNATIONAL VISITOR AND FULBRIGHT PROGRAM. USIA STOPPED FUNDING THE SMALL USIS EFFORT IN BRUNEI JANUARY 1, 1996. BECAUSE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS EFFORT, I HAVE CONTINUED TO MAINTAIN THE RUDIMENTS OF A USIS OPERATION, SUCH AS DISTRIBUTING THE WIRELESS FILE AND MAINTAINING CONTACT WITH BRUNEI'S ONE UNIVERSITY, DRAWING FROM THE EMBASSY'S MINISCULE BUDGET. WE HAVE TWO INTERNATIONAL VISITOR CANDIDATES IN THE PIPELINE FOR FY-96 PROGRAMS.

AT PRESENT WE HAVE AN OUTSTANDING FULBRIGHT PROFESSOR AT THE UNIVERSITY, AND A SIMILARLY OUTSTANDING USIA-PROVIDED LIBRARY FELLOW HELPING TO ESTABLISH THE LIBRARY AT THE NEW UNIVERSITY CAMPUS. THE BRUNEIAN GOVERNMENT PAYS FOR ALL EXPENSES FOR THESE TWO INDIVIDUALS, EXCEPT FOR THEIR STIPEND. DESPITE USIA'S SHRINKING BUDGET, FUNDS SHOULD BE FOUND TO CONTINUE A MODEST IV AND FULBRIGHT PROGRAM HERE. THREE IV GRANTS PER YEAR, AND ONE FULBRIGHTER, WOULD COST THE USG NO MORE THAN \$100,000 PER YEAR, AND WOULD BE MONEY WELL SPENT. EXPOSURE TO THE US BY MID-LEVEL BRUNEIAN OFFICIALS, AND THE REGULAR INCLUSION OF A FULBRIGHT PROFESSOR ON THE FACULTY OF THE UNIVERSITY, WHICH IS UNDER INCREASING PRESSURE TO "ISLAMICIZE", YET WANTS TO EXPAND AND GROW ACADEMICALLY, WOULD BE MONEY WELL SPENT. FURTHER, STOPPING THESE PROGRAMS COULD BE VIEWED BY THE BRUNEIAN GOVERNMENT AS A SNUB AND COULD IMPACT NEGATIVELY ON THEIR WILLINGNESS TO INCREASE COOPERATION WITH US IN OTHER AREAS.

¶12. THESE ARE MODEST PROPOSALS--A LITTLE FACE TIME, A MODEST USIA EFFORT. I URGE THAT THEY BE FAVORABLY CONSIDERED, AND WISH MY SUCCESSOR WELL IN BRINGING THEM TO FRUITION.

TULL